

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04939 061245Z

ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 04939

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EXDIS

FOR UNDER SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY
VEST

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: :INT, SS
SUBJECT: REPRESENTATIONS TO AMBASSADOR ROVIRA REGARDING
REPORTED NEGATIVE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS CONCERNING
AMBASSADOR TODMAN

1. UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MIGUEL SOLANO
CALLED ME THIS MORNING REGARDING REPRESENTATIONS HE
SAID WERE MADE YESTERDAY BY UNDER SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER
AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST TO AMBASSADOR ROVIRA
OVER REPORTED NEGATIVE REMARKS MADE BY MIDDLE-LEVEL
FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIALS REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT
OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN TO MADRID.

2. SOLANO SAID THE MINISTRY HAD BEEN SURPRISED AND
TAKEN ABACK BY THESE REPRESENTATIONS BECAUSE THE SPANISH
GOVERNMENT HAD HAD NO RESERVATIONS ABOUT ACCEPTING
AMBASSADOR TODMAN, HAD GRANTED AGREEMENT RAPIDLY, AND
WOULD GIVE HIM EVERY SUPPORT IN HIS MISSION WHEN
HE ARRIVED. IT HAD, IN FACT A VERY FAVORABLE

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VIEW OF AMBASSADOR TODMAN, HAVING HAD EXCELLENT
REPORTS REGARDING HIM FROM, AMONG OTHERS, JUAN ANTONIO
PEREZ-URRUTI, WHO HAD SERVED WITH HIM IN COSTA
RICA AND WAS NOW IN THE MINISTRY. SOLANO WAS LOW
KEY IN WHAT HE SAID ABOUT THE REPRESENTATIONS.

2. I SAID I WAS SURE THE REPRESENTATIONS STEMMED

FROM THE MEISLER ARTICLE IN THE "WASHINGTON POST". WHEN SOLANO COMMENTED THAT HE HAD NOT READ THE ARTICLE BUT THAT THE "POST" WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO MAKE TROUBLE, I SAID I DID NOT THINK IT WAS QUITE THAT SIMPLE AND I BELIEVED MEISLER PROBABLY HAD A BASIS FOR WHAT HE HAD WRITTEN IN TERMS OF COMMENTS THAT MIGHT VERY WELL HAVE BEEN MADE TO HIM BY A MIDDLE-LEVEL FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL. SOLANO REPLIED THAT MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIALS DID NOT SPEAK FOR THE TOP LEVEL OF THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT, AND REPEATED THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOULD WELCOME AMBASSADOR TODMAN. I SUBSEQUENTLY SENT SOLANO THE TEXT OF THE MEISLER ARTICLE.

3. THE BASIS FOR MY RESPONSE TO SOLANO, ALTHOUGH I DID NOT TELL HIM THIS, WAS THAT A MIDDLE-LEVEL FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL WHO IS KNOWN FOR HIS TENDENCY TO BE CRITICAL, MADE REMARKS TO ME ALONG THE SAME LINES AS THOSE REPORTED BY MEISLER AT PROBABLY THE SAME COCKTAIL PARTY. MY REPLY TO HIM WAS THAT AMBASSADOR TODMAN IS A HIGHLY RESPECTED PROFESSIONAL WITH A FINE CAREER WHO HAS ALREADY HAD THREE EMBASSIES AND AN ASSISTANT SECRETARYSHIP AND THAT I WAS SURE HE SUPPORTED THE UNITED STATES HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND WOULD DO AN EXCELLENT JOB IN MADRID. I HAVE ASKED MISSION PERSONNEL TO

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RESPOND TO ANY NEGATIVE COMMENTS OR SPECULATION ALONG THE SAME LINES AND ALSO NOT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ISSUE BY REPEATING NEGATIVE COMMENTS THEY MAY HEAR FROM OTHERS.

4. I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED OF WHAT WAS SAID IN THE REPRESENTATIONS TO ROVIRA. EATON

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